

**Rick Wolf**  
**435 Glen Park Drive**  
**Bay Village, Ohio 44140**

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January 28, 2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Ashcroft:

Microsoft and the Department of Justice recently reached an agreement ending a three-year-long antitrust suit. I am in the computer industry and thus feel more confident to comment on the case. It should not have happened. The case was brought simply to give an advantage to Microsoft's competitors. I am as happy as I can be with the settlement, and hope this issue is finally over.

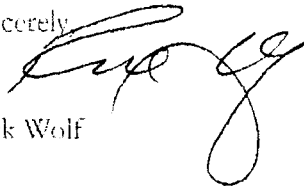
What is totally ignored, and what I don't understand, is the lack of recognition of the way things were before Microsoft. Before Microsoft, there was no compatibility between software packages. You could have ten different software packages, none of which "talked" to each other and you were left to have to deal with ten different companies. Nothing worked. Bill Gates saw an opportunity and seized it. Isn't that what you're supposed to do? Would it have been any better if it had been Sun Microsystems? Or IBM? Would the Justice Department be hounding these companies? Is success in this country only acceptable if kept within limits strictly defined by the federal government? I have problems with the federal government and its intrusion into our everyday life. Can I bring suit against the federal government for being too large? Another example is AT&T. We had the best phone system in the world. Now, I do not understand my phone bill, I have to talk to any number of people, none of which take responsibility for my problem. I pay just as much for a fraction of the service. But, hey, the goal was accomplished: break up AT&T. It was too big, too good.

The result of Microsoft's "business practices" is widely available, higher quality software at a very reasonable price. The only harm to the consumer comes from lawsuits like these. Companies should spend their money on research and development not legal fees.

If my government wants to fix something that's broke, they should take a look at the medical industry.

I appreciate your time in this matter, and would like to reiterate that fact that I am happy with the settlement. The economy can now move on.

Sincerely,

  
Rick Wolf